

NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE POLICY DIRECTIVE 30-119
2004

Administration and Operations

***OPERATING AGREEMENT BETWEEN REGIONAL OFFICES AND
REGIONAL SCIENCE CENTERS***

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS:

MEMORANDUM FOR: Regional Administrators
Science Directors

FROM: William T. Hogarth, Ph.D.

SUBJECT: Operating Agreement Between NOAA Fisheries Science Centers
and Regional Offices

The attached operating agreement is the first in a series of Agency Operating Agreements that are being updated and/or created to provide NOAA Fisheries with a foundation for achieving our longer term NOAA and Fisheries strategic plan goals as well as our annual operating plan goals.

These agreements will improve agency effectiveness by building positive working relationships at all levels, and creating effective, innovative work environments in support of management, research, and service excellence to the American public. This Operating Agreement was last updated and approved by the Leadership Council in 1997. Given the passage of time and current changes in NOAA and Fisheries, the operating plan has been revised accordingly. This document was sent to you for review in August and has also been reviewed by Mike Sissenwine, Rebecca Lent, John Oliver, and other key personnel. Thank you all for your valuable input.

Operating Agreements are essentially statements of expectations between the leadership and staff of professional entities and should foster a “no surprises” policy and facilitate a high degree of consultation between one another. The primary operational tenet of an Operating Agreement is that the working relationship between professional entities is based on a high level of trust in support of a shared mission. This Operating Agreement pertains to interaction and collaboration between NOAA Fisheries’ Regional Science Centers (Science Directors (SDs)) and Regional Offices (Regional Administrators (RAs)) for the development and implementation of the Agency’s mission. This relationship should be one of mutual exchange of information. Fulfilling this obligation to one another is critical to the success of each Financial Management Center (FMC) and ultimately that of the Agency. Trust is the basis that enables each of us to realize expectations and to place each FMC, office, or other entity in a strong and advantageous position. To ensure that trust is honored mutual efforts at problem-solving should be built upon recognition of the Regional Offices’ and Science Centers’ legitimate roles. Any actions that disappoint reasonable expectations or place either person in an untenable or embarrassing position can undermine trust and should be avoided.

This Operating Agreement is to be signed and implemented immediately for use in this fiscal year. To facilitate this, everyone will sign the operating agreement when you are here the week of February 16th for our budget meeting. In the meantime, you should review and discuss with your counterpart.

The next draft Operating Agreement, that between Headquarters Offices and the Regions and Science Centers, is being modeled after this one. It will be tailored to meet a different scope and will be circulated shortly for your input.

Attachment